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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 007754

SIPDIS

STATE FOR UNDERSECRETARY GROSSMAN, AC AND SA/RA, DOD FOR
DTSA AND OSD OFFICE OF MISSILE DEFENSE POLICY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/15/2014

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SUBJECT: INDIA REQUESTS PATRIOT PAC-2 CLASSIFIED BRIEFING

REF: STATE 260824

Classified By: DCM Robert O. Blake, Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

1. (C) Following up discussion at the recent US-India Strategic Stability Dialogue (reftel), the GOI has conveyed a December 8 letter (full text para 2) from Foreign Secretary Saran to Undersecretary Grossman formally requesting a classified briefing on the Patriot PAC-2 missile system. The decision to move ahead on this initiative was clearly timed with a view to the impending visit of SECDEF Rumsfeld. However, it also reflects a prolonged debate within the Congress government over missile defense policy, and the GOI conclusion that deeper US-India collaboration in this area would help to strengthen our new partnership and would advance India's broader security interests. Against this background, mission requests DTSA assistance in scheduling a classified briefing as early as possible in 2005.

2. (U) Begin text GOI letter:

Dear Mr. Undersecretary,

I refer to your letter dated October 1, 2004 offering India the opportunity to purchase Patriot Advanced Capability-2 (PAC-2) missile defense capability as part of the reciprocal steps contemplated in Phase 1 of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership.

In order to evaluate the proposal, concerned Indian experts would be interested in receiving a classified briefing on the PAC-2. An early US Government response in that regard would allow the ongoing strategic dialogue and NSSP-II discussions to proceed forward.

With assurances of the highest consideration.

Shyam Saran
MULFORD